

Memo to JL

July 25, 1968

to respond to the Czech crisis and the Sakaroff's manifesto. The New York Times and James Restons' columns have clearly been devoted to conveying a message that the state department would be unwilling to frame in official terms for the fear, clearly expressed, of provoking and justifying even more intense Soviet intervention (Slovakia). The editorials that appeared on the 19th and the 21st and again in today's New York Times stress the hazards of an aggressive Soviet policy. It is unfortunately difficult to ~~communicate~~ communicate an incentive on the other side, that a more liberal Eastern Europe would make it possible to negotiate more relaxed terms for arms control agreements. This might be the main thrust of a positive response to Sakaroff's manifesto.

An Olliphant cartoon that appeared in the Post for July 20, is probably the most poignant reminder of our dilemma. It shows the Russian strategists cautioning that if they let Czechoslovakia go, the domino theory would apply. Reston makes an essentially comparable point in his article for July 24.

The one thing that does need further comment is his article of July 19 on pulling troops back from Europe. He refers to the American contribution to NATO as an effective shield for Western Europe that has encouraged liberal forces in Eastern Europe. This is certainly a debatable proposition. On the other hand, the utility of American forces in Germany does deserve very cautious consideration has an alternative to the probable development of an independent German force if we were not there. In practice this means that we still do have an army of occupation and probably will need to continue to have one until some effective international peace keeping force can be organized

to take its place. Imagine the unpredictable consequences deriving from the pressure from right wing elements and forces for unification of Germany if the West German government did have an independent military capability comparable to the French. It probably should be pointed out to the USSR that the American presence in Europe is a defense against due responsible autonomous action and should be reassuring rather than otherwise. If the Warsaw pact were so constructed that it required a similar community of action, we could have a comparable sense of security on our side. This would be a very difficult subject to negotiate explicitly but it is certainly what both sides would like to see brought ab out for the other.